

Committee Secretary

Senate Standing Committees on Education, Employment and Workplace Relations

PO Box 6100

Parliament House

Canberra ACT 2600

Australia

Submission to the Inquiry into the Fair Work Amendment (Small Business-Penalty Rates Exemption) Bill 2012

Senator Nick Xenophon's bill in parliament to remove weekend and overtime penalty rates in retail, restaurant and catering sectors is a travesty for workers in these areas. If implemented it flow through to many more industries. Thousands of workers will be disadvantaged as well as their families.

Weekends maybe outdated but only for a limited number of Australians. Hospitality and retail staff love their weekends too but don't get them often, if at all. Hospitality staff can be even more disadvantaged than retail as the hours they are expected to work are even more extensive.

I have or maybe had permanent full time employment with weekends free. (As I work in the TAFE sector in Victoria I have no idea by the time this is read whether or not I still have a job.)

Having three children who work in hospitality trying to find times when we can all get together is impossible unless one or all of them take time off work to do so. When this

is extended further afield in the family the problem compounds. Half the people currently working in my family are in the hospitality industry.

They can't see family and friends as often as they would like. Most of their friends have weekends free. They have to say they are unable to work various shifts just to attend family and friends' get-togethers as these are held on weekends.

A high proportion of hospitality staff are casual workers. All three of my children are casual workers who work regular hours. This would equate to the same or more hours, than most full time permanent staff members would work. It is not unusual for them to work more than five days straight. Sometimes up to ten or fourteen. One works six days on and one off. They don't get the benefits as a permanent member of staff. They only get paid if they work therefore they have to miss many social activities to earn money.

Weekend penalties help make up for some of the stresses and disadvantages of the hours worked, such as late nights, early mornings, late nights followed by early mornings and split shifts. As well as working on weekends. It is not a high hourly rate even with the additional hourly rate paid for casual workers. They may love the industry but losing weekend penalties will make them seek other employment with more congenial hours of employment.

Why should those that work in retail and hospitality industries be punished for working the hours that suit others free time? Why should weekends be outdated for only some workers and not others? If businesses are unwilling to pay penalty rates they need not open. If weekends are outdated why are businesses so keen to open on weekends when they need not? If Saturday and Sunday are just like the rest of the week why don't more people work these days? There would be less strain on infrastructure such as roads and public transport if everyone took a turn on working these days. Why is it just the service industries that are singled out? At least at the moment they are being singled out. If this is made permanent more businesses will follow; any business that has employees working early or late shifts and weekends.

If this bill is aimed at getting employment for students and those who can only work weekends, rather than larger profits for small business, why are only small businesses going to be exempt? The larger the business, the more people, including students will be employed. It doesn't make sense.

Not all retail and hospitality businesses are in a position to open weekends. If businesses find it is better to close on weekends then they need not open. The reason is not necessarily wages. Businesses also need to look at the way they operate and the amount of customers coming through.

Let Australian workers keep their weekends. If they can't have them due to work commitments let them have their penalty rates to make up for what they are missing. Most people appreciate their time off on the weekend. It gives them time to unwind and stay in touch with family and friends. I enjoy my weekends and the company of those I care about to share them with.

Weekends are not outdated. They are an important part of our society and are a precious time for many people. Retail and hospitality workers should not be penalised.

Submitted by

Lynanne Butturini

Wednesday 19th of September 2012